

# IDAHO YOUTH SPEAK

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## What Does Tough on Crime Mean?

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We vote to be tough on crime but what does that really mean? Does that mean we lock up kids in Idaho detention centers and throw away the key? Or does it mean that, as a state, we get to the bottom of the issue and help the youth live up to their full potential? In the State of Idaho, juveniles in detention are now being seen by a clinician to address their needs.

What does this mean for youth in Idaho? When this project started in 2006 it was discovered that out of 335 juveniles only 17% of kids did not have a mental health or substance abuse diagnosis. That means there



were 83% of those 335 juveniles who had a provisional mental health and or substance abuse diagnosis. Due to this pilot project, clinicians are now required in detention centers around Idaho, helping juveniles understand what is happening in their lives and how to more effectively handle the stresses that

come their way. By doing this they are working with not only their substance abuse but mental health issues as well.

After the clinicians work personally with the youth they can make recommendations

for treatment. When youth are released from detention they can then receive the proper services to help integrate them back into the community. These services can range from substance abuse

classes to family counseling to anger management classes.

Should we be sending youth to detention so that they can discover how to handle their mental health issues and substance abuse, or is it time the State of Idaho stands up and makes our communities responsible for the youth in them? If we are going to be tough on crime, let's be effective.

~ Fernando Flores,  
Idaho Juvenile Justice Commission



## Josh's Story

By Susan Delyea, Youth Member

This is the story of Josh. Josh is a 15 year old Idaho youth currently going through the juvenile justice system. The IJJC Youth Committee has teamed up with Josh to tell his story and gain some insight into the life of a troubled youth. We will tell Josh's story in several parts, starting at the beginning.

Josh grew up in California near the reservation where his Native American family had lived. His grandfather was a highly respected member of the tribe and Josh felt strong ties to the community. Josh's family became involved with illegal drugs, eventually leading to Josh using Marijuana and Methamphetamine at a young age. When Josh was ten years old, his family moved to Idaho where Josh found himself battling depression and cultural confusion.

At age 14, Josh began to feel that he was losing his battle with depression and substance abuse and sought help from ICAN (Integrated County Accountability Network), a diversion program working in his community. For the next eight months Josh was in and out of a mental hospital, largely at his own request. Having been diagnosed with Schizophrenia, Josh's doctors worked toward getting him the correct medications. Eventually, Josh attempted suicide and his family decided to send him to State hospital. Josh stated that while at the hospital he was threatened verbally by another youth and, in anger, damaged hospital property leading to him being placed on probation when the hospital pressed charges.

Josh's probation officer, also the director of ICAN, worked with Josh to get him more involved with the ICAN program, as he was unable to participate fully due to hospitalization. Josh's probation officer used the same type of wrap-around services as ICAN: an individualized plan that involves the community in all stages to help the youth and family utilize their strengths.

During the interview, Josh reflected that it would have been more effective for him to see an ICAN tracker (someone who monitors behavior, watches for drug/alcohol abuse, and dangerous indicators) more than twice a week. Josh also felt that it would benefit him to see his counselor more frequently. Josh wanted to remain fully involved in his treatment plan and worked closely with his counselor, doctor, tracker, school, and probation officer to find the right method. Josh still struggles with handling his diagnosis. His probation officer reports that he has tough work ahead in learning to take accountability for his actions. With the support of his family and his community, Josh is working toward finding the key to his success, including working with the IJJC Youth Committee.

The Youth Committee believes that it benefits our communities to know the struggles that youth endure and to hear their feedback related to the care and support they receive. We will continue to follow Josh's story and hope to share in his success through his experience with Idaho's juvenile justice system.

~Susan Delyea, Idaho Juvenile Justice Commission

***"I was  
scared of  
what I was  
doing. I  
needed  
help."  
- Josh***

# Rhythm in Youth

## Pain in Life

Needle spoon fire ice  
 You feel so nice  
 When I feel pain  
 You make me feel numb  
 You make me feel loved and wanted  
 When I feel despair and cold  
 Needle spoon fire ice  
 You feel so nice  
 I role the dice an chance my life  
 As I shake while my muscles ache  
 I see feel hear nothing but silence  
 Needle spoon fire ice  
 You feel so nice  
 You took my life and played me a fool  
 I see the tunnel and run the other way  
 I just want to stay and get out of the fray  
 IV needle faces  
 Clear love faces  
 I wake with faces in my sight  
 I grin in such delight  
 I guess now you can say I seen the light  
 Family strength love  
 Stars trees eagles  
 I see stars shine pure and white  
 I smell trees of pine that smells so divine  
 I see eagles stand out with songs of freedom  
 I wished and now I begin to hear  
 Live love teach  
 I say this not to preach  
 I only say this to give hope when you feel none  
 I fight for my chance to live.

By Jon-Micah

## My Son's Prayer

You hear his cries, as I cannot  
 You see his fears I know  
 You feel the tears upon his cheek  
 Please wipe them while I go  
 No man could love him as I do  
 No heart could miss him so  
 I make mistakes to leave his side  
 Please guide him as he goes  
 Be his shelter from the storm  
 A place he feels is safe  
 Tell him that I love him  
 And bless him with your grace.

## Unnamed

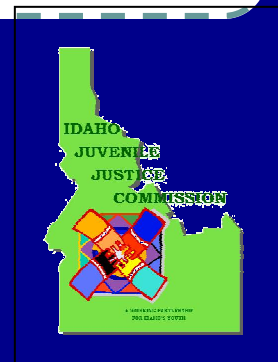
It is not that our dreams are possible,  
 It is not like our dreams are unreachable,  
 But they are fogged out by the dark clouds in our mind,  
 That we can not rise to our full potential,  
 We fall blindly into the lies from our traitors,  
 The lies that flow into our ears,  
 That we are worthless,  
 But I am not.

The Idaho Juvenile Justice Commission is a board of Governor-appointed volunteers from each district working to represent the interests of Idaho concerning its youth. The Commission meets regularly with the goal of making Idaho a safer, more productive place for its communities.

We, the Youth Committee, are the heart and spirit of the Commission, made up of young adults who have experienced the situations that many Idaho youth currently encounter.

We created this newsletter with the idea of highlighting programs and youth who are making a difference in their communities and changing their lives for the better. We are empathetic to the struggles adolescents face today and strive to bring awareness to, and address, these issues.

With this newsletter, and help from the Idaho Juvenile Justice Commission, we hope to inspire our youth to make better choices to improve their lives.



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